

Neal Dow on Governor Garcelon Maine and the Maine Law.

In Atlanta, Georgia, Gov. Garcelon has been interviewed upon the matter of the Maine

23d, ult., contains a column report of what he is represented as having said. Gov. Garcelon is a man of good personal character; think he is a teetotaler; he has no sympathy with the liquor traffic, that "gigantic crime of crimes," nor with the low, vile haunts where liquor is sold in this State. I do not believe, therefore, that the Governor is correctly reported by the Constitution, for anything more false and foolish in relation to the Maine Law and its results can hardly be imagined. I have before me now, many letters from different parts of the country, containing newspaper accounts of the Governor's pretended remarks, and urgently asking me for a true statement

I cannot follow the Constitution in detail through its article, as it would require one full page of the Press in small type to do so; but I will notice briefly, though sufficiently, all his points. The accuracy of the reporter may be fairly imagined by the first sentence which he puts into the Governor's mouth: "The Maine Law was framed and passed by Neal Dow!" But the Governor goes on: 1. "I am not certain that its operations have been beneficial." Now the law has been in operation for more than twenty-six years, and the Governor can not yet say, one way or the other, whether its

2. "It is impossible to enforce it." Gov. Chamberlain, Gov. Perham, Gov. Dingley, Gov. Connor, and Senators and Representatives in Congress and many others in printed documents declare that this law is as well enforced as our other criminal laws are; and that it is true. This enforcement has been at times pitiful and capricious in certain localities; but generally it has been and is well enforced. It has absolutely abolished distilleries, breweries

lign, wine faceries; it has absolutely driven the liquor traffic out of all our rural districts, smaller towns and villages, and in the larger towns has driven it into dark, dirty, secret holes, kept almost exclusively by the lowest class of foreigners. It has reduced the sale of liquor in this State to at least one tenth of what it was before, when we had open and free runshops, wholesale and retail all over the State, with many distilleries and large importations of West India rum. Every intelligent, unprejudiced citizen of Maine knows this to be true.

3. "There are a great many secret bar rooms hidden away in the vagabond quarters of the city, usually in cellars, back rooms, &c.

can be imagined." "The police find them, but to very little purpose. The police in our cities are usually an unreliable class of men, being politicians or the tools of politicians. In many cases they are open to bribes, in consideration of which they agree to leave these bar-rooms alone, and even protect them by their secret sympathy." I only remark on this, that I do not know of a single case that can justify this statement, and I do not believe that Governor Garcelon does, and therefore I conclude that he is grossly misrepresented. How our most respectable policemen, sheriffs and sheriff's officers may like that, I cannot say. But I know that the facts are

correctly stated in this pretended report of the Governor's remarks, and that it contains most unjust and unworthy aspersions upon a most useful and reliable body of men.

"I think the proportion" (of drinking in Maine), "is about the same as in other States. In the country, liquor is carried by drummers in their carpet-bags, by peddlers in their packs and by commercial men in their sample-boxes. * * * There are too, a good many persons who distil their own liquors. They have little retorts that are excellent distilleries. A man can put one of these in his parlor and distil in a short time, liquor enough to keep him drunk a week: This is done by a great many." All this is useful.

"I don't believe the Governor said it. There is not one tenth so much liquor sold in the State as formerly. Large regions of our territory are entirely free from the sale. The habits of our people are wonderfully changed for the better. I never heard of a case of a commercial traveler or a peddler carrying about liquors in sample box or pack; I do not believe there has been such a case. I never heard of a little distillery in a private house; I don't believe there is one in the State; the Governor, no doubt, has heard the enemies of the Maine Law say that, but I don't believe he knows of any such case, or has even heard of one, on reliable authority. I don't believe that any citizen would be so foolish as to

any citizen or drunk with a pater makes rum in it and gets drunk thereon for a week, or for any other time, and I don't believe the Governor ever knew of such a case. But if all this were so, what then? It shows most conclusively that the law is so vigorously and successfully enforced as to exclude liquors from the State to such an extent that people resort to "little retorts in their parlors." Now before the law, liquors were carried about all over the State in hogheads and barrels, and in packages of every kind; by horse teams, by ox teams—full loads of them; by railroads and steamboats. On every highway through the State all this could be seen any day, every day; but now the pretended report of the Governor's

Remarks say they are carried about in carpet-bags, in peddler's packs and in sample boxes—and yet, according to the same most veracious report, there is as much drinking in Maine under this state of things as in the old time; and as much “as in other States” where the liquor traffic is free! It is only necessary to state the case as the report puts it to show how very false, foolish and absurd it is.

“SUBSTITUTES FOR WHISKEY.”

5. “Are there not substitutes that are sold for spirituous liquors?”

“Yes sir. It is wonderful to what extent that has gone. There are men who peddle those things all over the State. A man will come into a village and say, ‘I have a new

He then asks you to take a little powder and ask it for a loaf of bread. He then sprinkles another powder in another loaf and asks you what that is. You reply that it is the same powder as the first, so the prohibition laws make it impossible to get the real stuff, and so it is profitable to the quacks to sell it in small amounts, and they demand higher prices for them. He then says that he really uttered this pitiful nonsense and bosh, and no doubt he had heard it; but I cannot conceive of a man being such a tremendous ninny as to believe that there is not a word of it true. — I mean about the "difficulty" of getting about the "impossibility" (difficulty) of "getting the real stuff," is quite true. But then

"I cannot say that the law is not a failure," he reported to his constituents. "I think it is a success. It has not been a failure. Throughout the whole reported interview the Governor is represented as frequently uttering these manifest and absurd contradictions."

"Is the Maine Law then a failure?"

"I cannot say that, and yet it has certainly not diminished its absolute successfulness" (Here it is quite evident some one had taken too much "powder.") After the thirty years of trial it is not a failure. It is a success. It is a success. As for myself, of course, all my sympathies are with the cause of temperance, but I am unable to say whether or not I believe in the Maine Liquor Law. I mean in its efficiency. I mean in its ability to do what it is intended to do. I consider an open experiment. There is no principle of government, no public policy more thoroughly settled in Maine than this. It

the registry law and the voting by ballot; at the same time the Governor was asked to give free vote in order to secure an honest election, that the true will of the people may find expression. The Republican party has always been and unanimously supported it, and the Democrats have been equally ready to be persuaded to favor license. The Legislature of Maine in 1877 without a dissenting vote passed an additional act of greater stringency than any which had preceded it, and the Legislature of 1878, by a vote of 27 to 17, affirmed the whole policy of the Maine Law, and anew gave in its adhesion to it. After all this, the Governor is reported as saying that it is yet an open question.

And the Governor is now unable to say one way or the other, whether he believes in the Maine Law, that is in its efficiency, at the same time he is reported as having stated

efficiency. The Governor lives in Lewiston, the largest manufacturing town in the State, and the population largely made up of such foreigners as usually crowd such places. An English gentleman told me that he was there some time ago on business, and at the largest hotel he heard a stranger ask the landlord for a glass of brandy. The landlord assured him that he

